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It's all change for *Captain Britain Monthly*, Number Five. We said goodbye to *Paragon Of Painthorpe Street* last issue, and, following their traumatic introduction to one another, *The Free-Fall Warriors* are taking a rest for a while. They'll be back, though, in a story provisionally titled *Heads You Lose*...

Filling our main back-up strip slot is a new story called *Space Thieves*. Not a particularly adventurous title you might think, but don't let that fool you — this is one way-out action strip, featuring a host of oddball characters. Individually, they are only terrifying... together they are *Space Thieves*.

Also new this issue is our text story, *City*, the home of Amis, private investigator of the future.

Night Raven has unfortunately been squeezed out this month through lack of space, but *Abslom Daak* is here, encountering the Draconians (or should that be the Draconians encountering Abslom Daak?) for the first time, and the *Communications* page is back with more of your letters.

That leaves the good Captain himself, or rather, himself. Brian Braddock's doppelgänger trouble begins over the page, in *Double Game*. And that leads us nicely on to the double-sized cover with next month's *Captain Britain*. Make sure you're here for number six's stunning wrap-around cover painting... but enjoy this issue first, huh?

Editor: Ian Rimmer • Assistant Editor: Simon Furman • Design: John Tomlinson • Production: Alison Gill and Jez Meteyard • Advertising: Sally Benson (01 221 1232)



Captain BRITAIN contents



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Captain BRITAIN

DOUBLE GAME

JAMIE DELANO
ALAN DAVIS
CO-CREATORS
ANNIE HALFAGREE
LETTERER
IAN KIMMER
EDITOR

THE AIR SCREAMS
LIKE SIRENS
AROUND HIM.

THERE ARE ENEMIES
IN HIS CAMP.

HE SHOULD BE
AT HOME.

HIS FAMILY IS
THREATENED.





IT IS LIKE AN EARTHQUAKE.
THE HOUSE SHAKES WITH
FEAR.

MISS MEGGAN,
WAIT... IT MIGHT BE
DANGEROUS...

NO... NO...
STOP THEM...
THEY'RE KILLING
EACH OTHER...

MEGGAN...

WHERE'S
THE CAPTAIN,
BETSY...?

THE HOUSE IS
DISINTEGRATING,
FALLING TO...

...PIECES.

HOW DARE
YOU, IF YOU'VE
HURT HER...

Elmo. Quick,
dampen her.
She's a psycho-
blaster...

HOW MANY
MORE OF THEM
ARE THERE,
BONESAG?

STAY UP HERE
AND LOOK AFTER
ALISON, EMMA.
THERE'S TROUBLE
DOWNSTAIRS, THEY
NEED ME.

The target and his
paraform are below and
there are two above.
Both are in mild
systemic shock, though
one reads me...

FETCH THEM
TO THE PARTY,
FASCINATION.

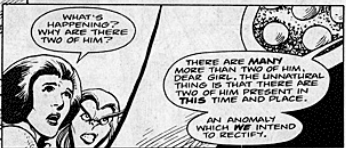
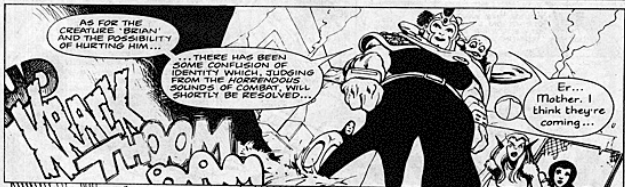
WHAT
ARE YOU DOING
IN OUR HOUSE?
WHERE IS MY
BROTHER?

IT'S A
HORRIBLE
DREAM, THAT'S
WHAT...

SORRY IF OUR
INTRUSION STARTLED
YOU, DEAR GIRLS, WE
WOULD HAVE KNOCKED
BUT WE WERE CAUGHT
UP IN THE EXCITE-
MENT OF THE CHASE.

AND THE
FR. DOOR WAS
OPEN.

CRUMP
BUNBLE
CRASH





BUT PERHAPS IN THE COURSE OF OUR RATHER HECTIC ARRIVAL I HAVE NEGLECTED THE NICETIES OF SOCIAL CONVENTION...

GATHER ROUND, CHILDREN, AND WHILE THE WARRIORS STRIVE ON, I WILL TRY TO SET YOUR ANXIOUS MINDS AT REST.



MY NAME IS GATECRASHER. THESE ARE THE TECHNET. WE HAVE COME TO YOUR TIMEZONE IN PURSUIT OF A RUTHLESS FUGITIVE. A THING WE DO FOR MONEY...

WHAT FUGITIVE? NOT BRIAN?

PATIENCE, PATIENCE. ALL WILL BE REVEALED.



"IT SHOULD HAVE BEEN A BREEZE. WE HAD HIS IMPRINT, FIXED HIM COLD. BUT HE HAD SOME PRESSING BUSINESS. WE WAITED FOR OUR MOMENT... THEN..."



"THE SNATCH WAS RIPE. IT WAS A TIGHT FIX. WE PULLED HIM FROM THE AIR LIKE FRUIT."

Snared, snared... Pull him down, Mother. It's a clear match on the scan. I found him, Mother—I said I would.



"THERE WAS A LOT OF ACTIVITY AROUND US. WE WERE ANXIOUS TO BE AWAY WITH OUR PRIZE. BUT SOMETHING ABOUT HIM CAUSED US DOUBT..."



He knows Legion and the Special Executive, but not us. That does not match the target's record.



"IT DID NOT TAKE LONG TO ESTABLISH THAT THE ELECTRONIC ALISA OF THE BEING'S SUIT HAD BEEN ALTERED TO MATCH THAT OF THE TARGET."

YOU'VE BEEN PULLED BY A DECOY, YOU WORTHLESS, SCRAWNY LIZARD!

"WE WERE UNDER OBSERVATION.
APOLOGIES WERE BRIEF BUT
SINCERE..."

SCAN WIDE.
AND THIS TIME FIND
HIM... OR I'LL HAVE
YOUR ARMS FOR
TOOTHPICKS!

SORRY,
CAPTAIN.

AHEM.

"HE WAS CUNNING. THIS CAPTAIN
BRITON. HE HAD LURED US TO
THIS UNIVERSE AND CROSSED
TRAILS WITH HIS PAKAFORM;
CAPTAIN BRITAIN."

I have
something.
Mother. It has
to be...

SO THIS
IMPOSTER IS
PRETENDING
TO BE ME...

"THE CAPTAIN
GRASPED
THE CONCEPT
IMMEDIATELY..."

...Yes. I'm
certain... North
North-West...
not far.

NORTH
NORTH-WEST...?
BETSY!

CAPTAIN...
WAIT. TOO LATE —
SUCH AN IMPULSIVE
CREATURE.

GATECRASHER...
LOOK!

"THE PARTY WAS GETTING TOO CROWDED.
WE DID NOT HAVE TIME TO BE SOCIABLE.
WE FOLLOWED..."

LOCK ON,
BONESAG...
LOCK ON. WE
MOVE.

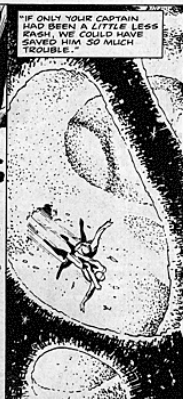
ALIEN LIFE FORMS
DISCORPORATING... EIGHT,
NO NINE. THE SUPERHUMAN
IS AIRBORNE. TRACK NORTH
NORTH-WEST. MACH...
HE'S VERY FAST.



SO HERE WE ALL ARE.
WHILE THOSE TWO ARE
TEARING EACH OTHER APART,
YAP IS UNABLE TO SEPARATE
THEIR ELECTRONIC AURAS.



"THE FIGHT IS FAR TOO FAST AND
CLOSE FOR US TO INTERVENE...
WE CAN ONLY WAIT FOR A VICTOR
TO EMERGE."



"IF ONLY YOUR CAPTAIN
HAD BEEN A LITTLE LESS
RASH, WE COULD HAVE
SAVED HIM SO MUCH
TROUBLE."



SPECIAL
RESPONSIBILITIES
FOR SUPERBEINGS, EH?
WHAT DO YOU DO—SWEEP
UP AFTER THEM?

I'VE TOLD YOU WHO
IS RESPONSIBLE. AND
IF YOU WON'T DO ANY-
THING ABOUT BRADDOCK,
I WILL!

HE IS BORING,
ISN'T HE?



INSPECTOR, I
THINK THAT YOU HAVE
FAILED TO GRASP THAT
WE HAVE **ABSOLUTE**
CONTROL...



YOU
CAN'T HIT ME
AND GET AWAY
WITH IT... I'M
A POLICE...

OFFICER,
UNDERSTAND THIS. IF
I WANT YOU TO DISAPPEAR,
YOU WILL DISAPPEAR.











100th ISSUE!

A SUPER POSTER!

THE TIME LORDS REVEALED!

A REVIEW OF THE SIX DOCTORS!

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THE 26TH CENTURY.
A TIME OF PEACE AND PROSPERITY
FOR THE **DRACONIAN EMPIRE**.
THE FRONTIER WAR WITH EARTH
HAS BEEN FOUGHT AND SETTLED.
NOW DRACONIAN FREIGHTERS
PLY THE TRADE-ROUTES WITH
RICH CARGOES - UNDER THE
WATCHFUL EYE OF THE
IMPERIAL BATTLE-CRUISER
FLEET.

BUT EVEN IN SUCH TIMES
AS THESE, THERE ARE THREATS...
AND VIGILANT MINISTERS TO
REPORT THEM...

YOU HAVE
"THE INTELLIGENCE
REPORTS, PRINCE
ISSALANDER?"

I DO,
IMPERIAL
HIGHNESS...

THE DALEKSSS
CONTINUE TO
EXPAND THEIR EMPIRE...
WITHIN THE LASTEST THREE
MONTHSSS, THEY HAVE
CONQUERED THE
PLANET MAZAM...

BUT WHILE THERE ARE
THREATS WITHOUT, THERE
IS ALSO DANGER WITHIN...

LISTEN TO HIM PRINCE!
ALWAYS PUSHING FOR MORE
BATTLES - CONQUERSSS... BECAUSE
HE OWNESSS THE EMPIRE'S
BIGGEST SHIPYARD...

FROM MAZAM
THEY CAN EASILY
REACH SHARDON...
AND FROM THERE THREATEN
OUR TRADE-ROUTESSS.

I BEG THAT
OUR DEFENCESSS
BE STRENGTHENED...
AND THE 27th FLEET BE
MOVED TO THAT
SECTOR...

BUT I'LL GET
CENSORSOR PRALING
TO INTERFERE WITH...A
FEW ROUNDS OF
DIPLOMACY WILL
SEESS TO THAT.

AND AXEDON, FIRST
SECRETARY OF THE
IMPERIAL RIGHT
HAND, IS ALWAYS
EAGER TO MAKE HIS
VOICE HEARD...

FORGIVE
ME, MAJESSSTY
I DISSSAGREE!

THE DALEKSSS
ARE ALREADY AT WAR
WITH THE HUMANSSS FROM
EARTH... THEY WILL NOT FIGHT
ON TWO FRONTS...

LET USSS
NEGOTIATE
WITH THE DALEKSSS!
WE CAN MAKE A TREATY...
TO GIVE USSS PEACE
IN OUR TIME...

BAH, THE
FOOL / WORDS
LIKE THAT WILL
DO / NO GOOD FOR
OUR ENTIRE
RACE...

Abslom Daak DALEKOOO CCCCCKILLER

Script: Steve Moore

Art: Steve Dillon

MOORE-DILLON



AND AS BALANDER LEAVES THE COURT...

YOU ARE
AMBER MY
PRINCE?

IT'S THAT
OBSCURESS
TODAY, THE
SECRETESS OF
THE RIGHT?

AH, BUT YOU
MUSST BE
CAUTIOUS, MY
LORD... THE PEACE-
GUARD HAS THE
EMPEROR'S BAR...



WE IN THE
MILITARY
KNOW YOU ARE
RIGHT... BUT THE
EMPEROR DOES
NOT WANT ANOTHER
WAR... NOT 5550 55500
AFTER FIGHTING THE
NEIGHBORS...

GENERAL
KARINISS... MY
LORD... YOU ARE WANTED
IN THE INTELLIGENCE UNIT.

AND WHEN
BALANDER
ARRIVES AT
THE UNIT
WHICH HE
COMMANDS...

FOUR
INTERESSERS
HAVE ENTERED OUR
TERRITORY...
DALEK
SHIPS!

WE'RE GETTING
A REPORT OVER THE
HYPER-555SPACE RELAY.
FROM OUR 555STATION
ON PLANET 555D
AG-487...

THREE 55555
IT IS 5555
DALEK... CERTAINLY... BUT
THE ONE THEY
POSSIBLY... I
DON'T KNOW...
IT LOOKS 5555...
ALIVE...

PERHAPS
IT IS 5555
5555555555
...THEY COULD ALL
BE DALEK SHIPS...
AND THEY'RE ON
COURSE FOR
DRACONIA...



YOU... GO IMMEDIATELY
TO THE EMPIRE! INFORM
HIM OF THE INTRUSION AND
THAT I BEG LEAVE TO
MOBILISE THE FOURTH
INTERCEPTOR
555SQUADRON...

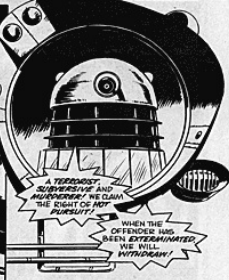
GET ME
THAT DALEK
COMMANDER ON
THE HYPER-
555SPACE RELAY.

AT ONCE,
GENERAL...



AND... I AM GENERAL
KARINISS OF THE DRACONIAN
IMPERIAL COMMAND! YOUR
SHIPS ARE VIOLATING OUR
TERRITORY! EXPLAIN YOURSELF...
OR FACE THE
CONSEQUENCES...

OUR AFFAIRS
NEED NOT CONCERN
YOU, DRACONIAN! WE
ARE CHASING A
CRIMINAL...



A TERRORIST
SUBVERSIVE AND
MURDERER! WE CLAIM
THE RIGHT OF NOT
PURSUITE!

WHEN THE
OFFENDER HAS
BEEN EXTERMINATED,
WE WILL
WITHDRAW!



AS THE DALEK
DEPARTS, A
HERALD ENTERS...

THE WORD OF THE EMPEROR
FOR PRINCE BALANDER AND THE
BARBARIAN-CRUSING GENERAL
KARINISS! TREMBLE AND OBEY!

THE IMPERIAL
ONE HOLDS TALKS
WITH AMBER. HE WILL
ISSUE A COMMAND
TOMORROW...

TOMORROW?!



THEY'LL BE ON AN HOUR!
DOORSTEP IN AN HOUR!
AND HE'S GOING TO TALK TO THAT
555SLIME-EYED 555SECRETARY
TOMORROW!

MY PRINCE...
THE DALEKS ARE
OPENING FIRE!

I'LL
555WATCH TO
555STATION AG-21!
WE'LL GET A BETTER
PICTURE!!





ISSS THISSS
HISSE, SSSALANDERT
OUGHT WE NOT TO
INFORM THE
EMPEROR?

AND
GET A
DECISION
TOMORROW.
KARINNESS?
NO...

AN ENEMY
OF THE DALESSSS
ISSS A FRIEND OF
MINE! LET'SSS
GO AND MEET
HIM...



AND SOON...

HE'SSS HERE!
I MUSSST CONGRATULATE
HIM ON HIS FINE
CONTRICKS...

WHATEVER HISSE
RACE, SSSALANDER, WE
DONT KNOW IF HE'LL BE
FRIENDLY... I HAVE
POSSESTED GUARDSSS,
IN CASSE...



AND THEN...

WELCOME,
WORTHY ONE, YOU
ARE AMONG FRIENDSSS!
MAY WE KNOW YOUR
HONOURABLE NAME
AND EXACTED
RANK?

MY NAME?
THOUGH A GOOD
QUESTION... LEMME SHEE...

BLURP



NOW I REMEMBER!
NAME SH... HIC...

ABSHLOM DAAK...



...DALEK-KILLER...

Next: **Daak Alliance!**



MC/MF

CITY

SNAPSHOT
episode 1

by Mike Collins

Illustrations by
Mike Collins and Mark Farmer

sit on the least shabby of the three chairs in my office-cum-apartment, my gaze fixed on the glittering structure of Armstrong Tower that rises up into the grey City sky, cloud-filled and grim. The rattling of the Cityrail, the chattering of the T-Vids echo through these thin walls. Somewhere a child cries, a man shouts. The wail of a mournful clarinet would seem appropriate here but instead there



are the hard-edged and unrelenting shards of mechanical noise and people suffering. No lyrical chord, but a tuneless melody played by, and for, the City.

Mezzanine is the middle of it all, not poor enough for the grey trenches of Ground Zero, nor bright enough for the sweeping spires of Plateau. I don't breathe the air, purified and scented to make every day feel like a glorious summer's day, nor inhale the dirt and dampness and stink of old tobacco. Here I breathe a static air – neither sweetened or stale. When I open my windows I taste both, mixed with the crackle of ozone as the Cityrail sparks by below; tainted by the panic felt by all at the coming of a new day. More challenge, more chance to lose your life, your position, or your job. To lose your job is to lose Mezzanine and the only faint chance you might have of attaining Plateau. You lie, you swindle, you wheel and deal. You don't sleep well, but getting there is always the hardest, isn't it? I try to keep apart from it all, but I can still smell the panic, understand the fear. Holding on by your fingernails to a job you hate, a life you despise. I'm lucky. I actually like my job. Sometimes.

My job means I look for missing persons, work as an accessory to the overworked police department who don't concern themselves with much less than mass murder these days. I'm good at my job. I get results. Not always the ones I want.

Martin Gallagher. He'd been dead a week now, his ashes scattered, but whatever form of funeral ritual his family had engaged in, in our overcrowded society where burial is illegal, and one more death means more air for the rest to breathe.

Life is cheap, death a giveaway.

The storm over the river, the rumbling of distant thunder, mark my bleak mood. Martin Gallagher was a name that meant nothing to me less than a dozen days ago. He had received awards for his work. I discovered later. He was a Vid-Network cameraman. The best.

"Mr. Amis?"

That day my door Vid-Monitor showed a woman, maybe thirty-five, thirty-six. Pleasant looking, but not particularly dynamic. I imagined her to be an employee of the State Records Office, or maybe a Utilities personnel officer, the sort that send out uniform "Best Wishes" memos on staff birthdays and dock their wages

the computer time to print it out.

"I'm Samantha Daly, City Network News co-ordinator. I have a contract for you." So much for the devastating investigative ability. The Skan indicated that she carried no concealed weapons, but did have a mini-recording device. In case a story came up at a moment's notice, I presumed. I signalled the Tri-Lok to open, and the impact door slid back. She entered.

"Your security facilities are quite basic, aren't they?" she asked with a condescending smile, as she sat herself down before my functional, if battered, desk.

"This is the butt end of Mezzanine, Ms. Daly. The only thing that separates it from Ground Zero is the floor numberings." I sat down behind the desk and activated the terminal.

"Now – what's the contract?"

She opened a jacket pocket and drew out a photograph, a glossy eighty by ninety millimetre flat shot. It was a young man no more than thirty, hair cut aggressively short, but he wore a wry smile. He looked more interesting than the woman who sought him.

"Martin Gallagher."



Apparently, Gallagher had gone to cover a routine murder in Sector Five, a seaboard housing complex in Ground Zero. That had been two days ago. No one knew what had happened to him since then.

"He's one of our top people – he's one of the team that give the City Network News its distinctive look." She was referring to the rapid cutting between items, dramatic lighting, and other such flashy paraphernalia that I found distracting rather than informative. But people don't want their attention held for too long.

"We'd like him found – we fear foul play. Martin has made many enemies – if something has happened, we'd dearly like to know. The police aren't interested. We want you to be. Your

account will be credited by fifty A-dollars a day, until you turn him up. Any questions?"

I admitted that there weren't. Her thorough manner took me by surprise – I'd accepted the contract almost before I realised. She left.

I keyed into the City crime computer and checked on the murder location, giving only a cursory glance at the details. Murders aren't my concern. Dead people aren't missing except in a spiritual sense, and that isn't my department. I wrote down the location – Cable 99's operation, Sector Five – and got my coat.

I just do my job.

I caught the Downshaft to Ground Zero and waited for the Cityrail out to Sector Five. There was no private transport here, precious little in Mezzanine. The Utilities people made sure only the rich and influential could use the dwindling chemical fuels. Like when the oil companies bought out the city transport in the 1920s and 30s, so that people would have to use cars, the reverse logic now applied. City was run by the Utilities, powered by reactors upstate supplying heating, lighting, and even the Cityrail that I was waiting for. Late as usual.

Above and across Ground Zero, the massive T-Vids blared out light and jingles; screaming salesmen; desperately transient offers on ill-made and useless commodities to make you whole; guarantees of a better life, less grey. People don't so much watch them, as accept them, a part of life, like drizzle. Or late trains. Every hour, on the hour, there is a CNN bulletin. It's not easy to tell the news from the adverts.

As I stood on the draughty, dingy station I had a chance to pause and take it all in. Those waiting with me... people who waited every day with a curious mixture of agitation and resignation. Some looked down blankly as if staring would make the monorail carriage appear. Others read flaking and dated advertising on station boards, the same ones they had been reading for months. Years?

Entropy, I thought. When they rebuild the City at the turn of the century they didn't give it a fresh start but in some arcane way, accelerated the tendency to decay. The crime rate, killings, corruption, were all tied into that running down. Was Gallagher's disappearance?

The Cityrail finally arrived. A mechanical voice 'apologised' for the



delay and the journey finally began. In the carriage was the debris of previous tenants, marking their anonymous passage for posterity by empty cans and food cartons. Some left blood, others scarred the seats, some scribed their names or nom-de-plumes on the walls. No one noticed. So much for posterity. The grimy windows were a fitting frame for the bleak landscape of Ground Zero, such as it was, as we travelled over the rooftops.

A kid played his micro-taper loud, almost threateningly so, an old man scowled and the kid looked proud. He had aggravated somebody. It's a sort of contact, I thought. Outside, the clouds hadn't gone away, and it became difficult to tell where Ground Zero ended and the grey sky began.

On the way out to Sector Five there were no more than two dozen fellow passengers. Mostly the old, the stupid. No one clever lives in Ground Zero. You lived there because your resources, physical or mental, weren't up to trying to find a life in Mezzanine, where people seem driven to claw their way to higher tax brackets on the backs of their friends, scavenging for yet another A-dollar. That is, unless you're like me. A static job, and no ambition but to tread water, or maybe another city until death, seems a better proposition. I often think about space. I often think I'm the only one who does. NASA got disbanded in the 1990s, and the re-

placement, the World Astronautic Commission for Exploration has done little but set up a Mars colony. (There's an idea – live in a prefabricated cubby hole in a contained environment on another world – just like City life!). Well, maybe I'll go there one day, they say the sunsets are magnificent.

We passed through Sector Eight, part of which was without power due to a malfunction in City computer files. The computer refused to recognise the district existed, so no way was it about to waste power there. I had all this explained to me on the way down by the District Warden, an angry looking middle-aged man, who had apparently spent the morning arguing his case with City Planning.

"It's crazy", he reiterated. "Dis blasted Railway's computer acknowledges the district exists, but th' City computer don't! I got my people dyin' for the cold these nights! We get Under-City gangs in, wreckin' an' lootin'! An' all I get is some jumped up key tapper fobbin' me off with 'well, we'll have to check this through', like I could be lyin' about it!"

I sympathised with him – as a Seeker I spent long hours a week arguing with the City's computer personnel. I fared well against them only through my innate ability to 'seek' computer files as well as people, if not sometimes better.

"To rub salt into an' already congealed wound", he continued, "I get to hear that the pipeline work in

Sector Five is behind schedule and eating up City money like the A-dollar was goin' 'out of fashion!"

I started at that. Pipeline work. Sector Five. The murder that Gallagher had gone to cover was nearby. He'd never come back. I was just going to go there, sniff around, see if anyone had noticed Gallagher, and expect my enquiries to lead me a dozen Sectors away. If not another City. My theory had been that Gallagher had been bought out by another City Network and had left the City using the murder story as a cover. I imagined myself going back to Ms. Daly in a few days' time (say, when I'd amassed 200-300 A-s in my account – seemed a decent week's wage), shaking my head and apologising. "He's gone, and I can't find him, sorry." Now I wondered.

The District Warden got to his stop, stood by the doorway gesturing out and saying to me, "Look! The station's illuminated! But look past at the District – no lights! It don't exist!"

The door closed behind him, I turned away. The Cityrail travelled on.

At the Sector Five works it all seemed quite active. It was mid-afternoon. I got working. I flashed my I.D. at people I spoke to. Some things even in this century, don't change. I could have been Bogart in the "Big Sleep", or James Stewart in "Call Northside





777", any of those guys. Just doing my job, not expecting anything to turn up. Nothing unlikely. Unpleasant.

Like it always does.

"Yer snoopin'. Get." He was burly, at least two hands taller than me, and he wasn't the conversational type. He wore oily overalls.

"I'm a registered Seeker. On contract. I'm empowered to question—" I said 'Get', as in 'going'."

I had wandered, intentionally, towards the actual worksite. Cabling equipment and mechanical contrivances I didn't hope to guess the purpose of littered the landscape. I was afraid I was to join them. A couple of fellow workers came across to reinforce the opinion of my unpleasant acquaintance.

"Whatcha doin'?" asked one, more my height and build. He seemed more reasonable. A bit.

"I'm investigating the disappearance of a T-Vid cameraman, name of Gallagher. He was down here two days ago. Anyone see him?"

No one had up to now. I was just treating it all as routine questioning. Ms. Daly might as well get her money's worth.

"Hey, listen—two days ago a buddy got ached, Seeker," said the reasonable one. He didn't look reasonable any more. The third of the merry band spoke up.

"Yeah, Frank got done, recent like. You ain't welcome, jerk. Why don't you, like, take a walk, huh? We feel a bit sore about our buddy dyin', y'know?"

He advanced towards me, emphasising the point by waving a large spanner-type instrument that I felt it best for my health to avoid.

"Okay, guys—sorry for interrupting your work, and sorry about your buddy." I started to walk off, not taking my eyes off them for a second. They began to follow me. Hell, I thought. I was on a building site. Ahead, maybe sixty metres, was the gate. Behind me, about five metres, were three manual labourers intent on driving me out. At least. No one paid them any notice.

I quickened my pace towards the gate, they did too. No, not just drive me out. My mind flashed warning signals—they weren't going to let me get through the gate. I went to a sprint.

They ran faster.

I felt the rough hands grasp my overcoat about the same time as the high-tech spanner did some low-tech skull-crushing. I stumbled twice, got kicked a half dozen times.

"Dirty snooper", "Scum", and some-

less repeatable epithets came flying to add chorus to the physical blows. They were wrecking me. I couldn't get a solid footing to even start fighting back. In traditional private dick style, I blacked out.

I came to, and immediately wished I hadn't. I hurt. I was on the District waste site. It smelt. I stank. Relieved to find nothing broken—though my eye would do with a degree of tender loving care for a few days—I got up and left. My playmates had dumped me there with a love note pinned to my jacket to the effect that I'd be wise not to follow up my earlier round of questioning.

I'm not a physical man at the best of times, but the working over I'd been given seemed professional. As maintenance men they made great thugs. A lost vocation, I thought.

I decided to follow their advice and took the next Cityrail back to the centre. It was dark by now, and in the distance, standing like a golden needle, was Armstrong Tower. Around it, but none as tall, were the residences of the City and Utilities officials. Between them all, criss-crosses of pathways and roads, suspended in space. Plateau. Mezzanine rose up from Ground Zero near this 'crown' of light, but not so bright, and not so tall. Below that, the almost flat surface of Ground Zero. Nothing like glossing over class distinction, I thought.

As we passed through Sector Eight, I saw what the District Warden meant. The station glowed like the moon in a starless sky. There were no lights. A dead area, like a great black swathe cut through the night illuminations. I wondered how many would die before the clerk at City Planning did something about it.

Making my way back to the office, I earned several sneers and abuse for my odour. No one in Ground Zero had noticed, however. I showered while the desktop computer did me a print out of the details of the murder that Gallagher had gone to cover.

Frank Fiore. Thirty-two. One-point-eight metres tall. Afro-Caribbean. Employee of Cable 99. Working on the new pipeline project in Sector Five at time of death.

Police Record: Five minor drug offences (1997-2000); petty larceny (2005); bank fraud (2011); and nothing more for five years.

Cause of death: Assault by a deadly weapon. Assailant unknown. Presumed to be a mugging.

In police terms, a 'Forget About It' case. I had, too. It just seemed an incidental detail. Was it? If the three stooges got so worked up two days after a workmate died, what were they like the same day? What might they have done to Gallagher? Maybe he wasn't in another city being wine and dined by a new boss. Maybe he was at the bottom of that refuse tip they had dumped me on. Going back a step further, why had Fiore been killed? Was something happening in the works at Sector Five?

I decided to sleep on it. This had the feel of something bigger than just another missing-person case. I was afraid that my days of shuffling anonymity and keeping my nose clean, were about to be things of the past.

As I locked up the apartment, and set up the see-phone answering machine, I looked out at Ground Zero. Off in the distance I saw the black scar of the computer darkened housing area, and beyond, the glowing arc lights of the Cable 99 operation in Sector Five. Closer to me, the splendour of Armstrong Tower raised up into the night. The City council's home, fount of all law, and junk like that.

And there I was, alone in the grey middle of it all... in my three room office/apartment in Mezzanine, afraid of tomorrow. As I lay in my lonely bed, an even more fundamental question started to nag at my brain, making sleep impossible. Why does an award-winning, top-gilled news cameraman go to cover a murder the police couldn't be bothered with?

In the distance, the gabble of T-Vids whispered through the cold night...



Next *The 'Brave New World' Project!*

Captain Britain Communications

23 Redan Place, Bayswater, London W2 4SA, England.

As promised, more of your views on Captain Britain get an airing. Keep those letters coming...

Dear Ian et al,

I was there in 1976 when Captain Britain was unleashed on the awaiting masses. We'd been led to believe that he would be a British hero - as British as *Dan Dare* or *Sherlock Holmes*. Unfortunately this was not to be; instead we had a poor, less adult copy of any number of previous Marvel heroes. The whole series was cheap, rushed and gave little thought to what makes a character British. We had an American superhero, dressed in a Union Jack.

Basically, I feel Marvel faced a problem of direction, i.e. should they aim the character at the 'kiddies' or should they follow in the footsteps of heroes such as *Spider-Man* and the *Silver Surfer* and come up with a real hero for the seventies. Unfortunately, they chose the former and we were introduced to a character who would barely have made it in 1960, let alone 1976.

Perhaps the biggest fault in those first issues was the fact that they were being produced by Americans who had obviously spent little time, if any, in this country. Accordingly all characters acted and fought like Americans. There were other elements missing; a lack of blood and guts for one. Since those early issues we've seen more of this with the likes of *Slaymaster* and *Jaspers* and I can't help feeling it's a theme that works. Also lacking was self appraisal; as we all know, most Marvel heroes spend their time critically analysing themselves. Okay, the Americans seem to love this, but here it seems more or less unheard of. It seems to be understood that our heroes do not think outside their own existence.

Now here we are, some nine years on and at last Captain Britain has got his own comic back, and we're being treated to stories and art that are as good, if not better than, the stuff in the American market. The comic has a feel of its own and at last we have a comic to be proud of. It is to Marvel's credit that they've stayed at it and made Captain Britain the hero he should be. There's a bright future awaiting our first superhero, may he "live long and prosper!"

Dougal Dubash,

Devon.

We can't help feeling that your appraisal of the original Captain Britain stories is spot on. We've hopefully overcome these stumbling blocks and are doing our best to bring you a uniquely 'British' hero. Thanks for your words of praise.

Our Address:

Dear Ian,

Being an extreme genius I really enjoyed *Law and Disorder* in Captain Britain 2. For the first time I found the Crazy Gang interesting, but then I always did have a soft spot for eccentrics. (The soft spot is in my head.) It's good to see a few total nutters in the country's premier superhero strip. As always there was an awful lot happening this month, my favourite scene being the one in which the Gang turned the tables on the would-be muggers. I was most intrigued by the introduction of the ROX agents, and it was nice to see that other oddball, *Slaymaster*, again.

As for *Mastrex*, I hope she falls through a space-warrior (or a manhole, I'm not fussy). Dark Saturnyne indeed!

As for my New Year's resolution - well, one of them - I'll write shorter letters.

Best,
Mart Gray,
Cheshire.

We'll believe that when we see it...

Dear Staff,

Captain Britain was always one of my favourite heroes and now my prayers have been answered with this magazine. The only problem is that the good Captain deserves a longer story (more like 24 pages). Hope to see some American heroes guest-starring soon. *Abslom Daak* was fantastic, but I found *Paragon* boring. Good luck with your book, Captain. Alan Bainbridge, Kalamazoo, Michigan, U.S.A.

For the moment, the page count on the Captain Britain story remains the same - that way, you get more variety for your money. Thanks for the kind words; it's nice to know that we're appreciated both sides of the Atlantic.

Dear Captain Britain,

I think your comic is brilliant. I am a new reader to your comic. The best story of your comic is yours. I liked your first issue when you told us how you became Captain Britain. The best other story of your comic is *Abslom Daak*. I think the story is very good, the art is equally good as well. Paul Gibson, Lanarkshire.

We couldn't have put it better ourselves. Paul. Glad you're enjoying it.

Dear Sirs,

Captain Britain is one of the best Marvel comics out at the moment, though it's sometimes quite weird and hard to follow. *Freefall Warriors* and *Abslom Daak* are very good as well. When did Captain Britain first appear in a comic? I think it was in 1977, but I'm not quite sure. Why does Captain Britain always grit his teeth? Ian Corrie, Cumbria.

The Captain first appeared in October 1976. So you were close. And after all he's been through recently, is it any wonder he grits his teeth?

Food For Thought

The tragedy of Ethiopia continues. The worst natural disaster the world has ever seen will be claiming victims even as you read this. Literally millions and millions are still facing starvation despite all the excellent charity work that has already been done to alleviate the suffering. More help is needed...

That's why we bring to your attention a publication called *Food For Thought*. It's comic fadom's *Band-Aid*, featuring material from top "fan" names, backed up with contributions from comic notables such as Alan Moore, Bryan Talbot, Hunt Emerson and Captain Britain's own Alan Davis, who has also donated the cover art.

Warren Ellis, Matt Ginn, Gary Millidge and Dave Whitwell deserve praise for putting *Food For Thought* together. We wish their venture well, and encourage everyone who can to buy a copy. Published by *Flying Pig Publications* in late March (so it should be available now, at comic marts and various specialist comic shops), it costs £1. Proceeds will go to the ETHIOPIA FAMINE APPEAL FUND.

It's not often that you can buy a mag and save a life at the same time... purchase a copy of *Food For Thought*, and you just might do that.





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THIS IS THEIR STORY...

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YOU BETTER BE RIGHT ABOUT HIM NOT BEING ABLE TO FIND US IN HERE. I COULDN'T STAND ANOTHER MILLI-SECOND OF HIS STUPEFYINGLY BORING COMPANY!

WE'RE IN THE CLEAR—AS GOOD A PILOT AS HE IS, WE'VE FINALLY SHAKEN OFF THE DREAthy DRONGO FOR GOOD!

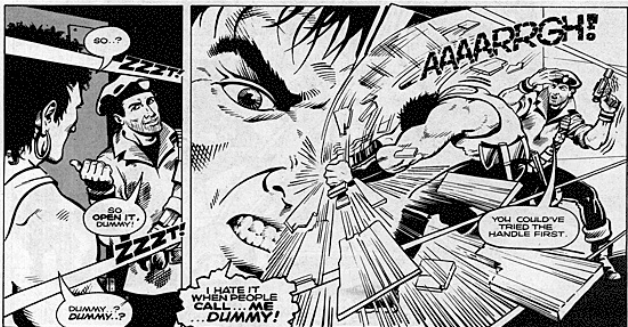
HE'S HERE! I'VE JUST SEEN HIM—HEADING THIS WAY!

HOW THE ORGLOUT DID HE—

IT DOESN'T MATTER—MOVE!

SCRIPT: DAVE HAPPER
PENCILS: BARRY KITSON
INKS: JEFF ANDERSON
LETTERS: STARKINGS
DEADLINE: RUMMER
PLUS: FURMAN
DIVERSING OUT:
TOMLINSON
CYNDIA: METEYARD
EDITORS: HAPPER
KITSON/ANDERSON
STARKINGS/RUMMER
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METEYARD







IT'S SOUNDING
VERY ROUGH
OUT THERE.

I HOPE MY
SHIP WILL BE
ALRIGHT WITH
ALL THAT
GOING ON.

TELL IT TO
THE COMPANIO-BOT!
I'VE GOT CUSTOMERS
WHO WANT TO
BUY DRINKS...



CYBO-GI
COMPANIO-BOT F

ARE YOU WAITING,
LONELY, DEPRESSED, OR
JUST BURNING?
BORING? THIS
DROID CAN
HELP...

A COMPANIO-BOT...
WELL, I'M CERTAINLY
WAITING, LONELY AND
DEPRESSED...



WAS THAT
YOU?



LORD AS I AM TO CAST
ASPERIONS ON A HUMAN'S
COMPETENCE, I MUST
POINT OUT THAT THE
FIFTY CREDIT PIECE IS
OF AN ENTIRELY DIFFER-
ENT SIZE, SHAPE AND
TEXTURE TO THE FIVE
DART PIECE WHICH YOU
HAVE JUST JAMMED
INTO MY MECHANISM...

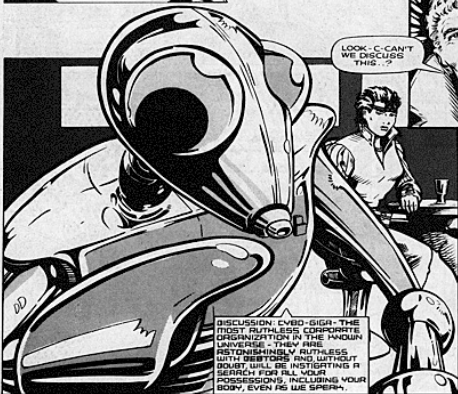
...AND WHICH WILL KEEP ME
ACTIVATED UNTIL MY NEXT
TWENTY-FIVE YEAR SERVICE...

BY WHICH TIME YOU WILL
OWE CYBO-GIGA FOUR
MILLION, TWO THOUSAND
MEGA-CREDITS.



WHAT?

LOOK - C-CAN'T
WE DISCUSS
THIS...?



DISCUSSION: CYBO-GIGA - THE
MOST RUTHLESS CORPORATE
ORGANIZATION IN THE HUMAN
UNIVERSE - THEY ARE
ASTONISHINGLY RUTHLESS
WITH DEBTORS AND WITHOUT
DOUBT WILL BE INSTIGATING A
SEARCH FOR ALL YOUR
POSSESSIONS, INCLUDING YOUR
BODY, EVEN AS WE SPEAK.

IN OTHER WORDS, TO
USE THE CURRENT
INTER-GALACTIC
VERNACULAR... YOU
ARE UP TO YOUR
EYES IN DEEP.

HOLY GOSH,
BOT-MAN!



MEANWHILE...

I'LL SET
SOME CHARGES
FOR THE REST
OF THOSE COPS.
SEE WHAT'S DOWN
THE CORRIDOR.

RRM.
I HATE BEING
CALLED
DUMMY...

GET MOVING,
NAT - THEY'LL
BLOW ANY
SECOND.

OH,
YEAH...

ANY
SECOND.
HONEST!

KA-VOOSH!

SEE-SUBTLETY
ALWAYS WINS
OUT IN THE
END...

OKAY - SO WHERE
DO WE QUIETLY
GO FROM HERE
THEN?

JUST LET ME GET
THIS MUCK OFF MY
REVOLUTIONARY
UNIFORM AND I'LL
GIVE IT SOME
THOUGHT.

EY, MICK - I HOPE YOU
WERE TELLING THE
TRUTH WHEN YOU SAID
YOU COULD BREAK
INTO ANYTHING...

WELL, WHAT
DO YOU
THINK...?

I THINK
IT'S A SPACE
SHIP, NAT...



ZART? SUDDENLY THERE'S PURPOSE TO EVEN THIS GORP'S EXISTENCE!

EXCUSE ME... I COULDN'T HELP OVERHEARING YOUR PROBLEMS WITH THIS COMPANIO-

-BOT HERE IF YOU'RE GOING TO ZART, MAYBE I COULD BE OF SOME HELP. I ONCE DID SOME ER CHARITY WORK THERE.



WOW! MY KINDA WOMAN!



WELCOME ABOARD! CAPTAIN HARDING AND HIS CREW CAST OFF FOR ZART RIGHT NOW.

CAPTAIN, IS IT WELL, CAPTAIN, I TRIED TO UNDERSTAND WHAT YOU WILL ACHIEVE BY THIS.



YOU'LL ACHIEVE "BOT OBSESSION IF YOU DON'T KEEP THAT TIN TONGUE STILL!

MADAM! REALLY...



IF I'M PAYING FOR YOUR TIME, BOT-MAN, YOU'LL DO AS I SAY, RIGHT, HONEY?

HONEY?

IF YOU INSIST, CAPTAIN...



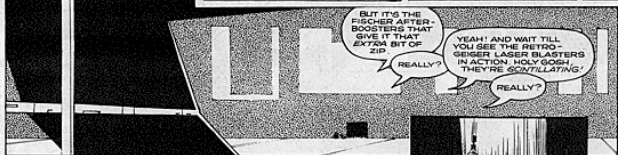
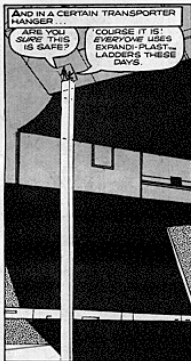
...I MUST COMPLY.

ZART, HERE WE COME - WAIT'LL YOU SEE MY TWIN-HYPER TRANSPORTER... IT SOUNDS VERY...



...INTERESTING...

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YOU TWO ARE PRISONERS OF MICHAEL THYME - FAMOUS REVOLUTIONARY CHAMPION OF THE PEOPLE, DEDICATED TO THE REMOVAL OF FASCIST DICTATORSHIPS AND CORRUPT ADMINISTRATIONS THROUGHOUT THE KNOWN UNIVERSE...

SO DON'T MOVE.

WE'RE GOING TO ZART.



THAT'S A NICE... WEAPON YOU HAVE THERE...



... BUT YOU WOULDN'T WANT TO SHOOT ME WITH IT ... WOULD YOU ... ?



RUATCH! ACTUALLY IF - IF YOU GET YOUR FRIEND TO LEAVE MY HEAD ON MY SHOULDERS, I'D BE ONLY TOO HAPPY TO TAKE YOU TO ZART...



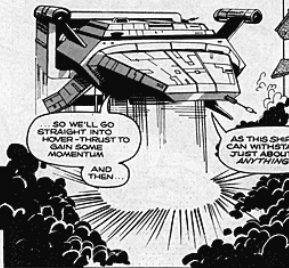
CAPTAIN - TWO QUESTIONS. IS IT WISE TO COMPLY WITH THE DEMANDS OF THESE RUFFIANS? AND HOW DO THREE-LEGGED ROBOTS USE EXPANDI-PURST™ LOGGERS?

WELL, I DON'T KNOW THE ANSWER TO YOUR SECOND QUESTION, AND I DON'T SEE THAT WE HAVE MUCH CHOICE WITH THE FIRST...



YOU DON'T HAVE ANY CHOICE - SO LET'S TAKE OFF!

ER, RIGHT YOU PROBABLY DON'T WANT TO BOTHER WITH GETTING CLEARANCE...



SO WE'LL GO STRAIGHT INTO HOVER-THRUST TO GAIN SOME MOMENTUM

AND THEN...

AS THIS SHIP CAN WITHSTAND JUST ABOUT ANYTHING...



... WE'LL GO THROUGH THE ROOF.

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AGE

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